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842 intelligent, or at any rate more articulate, than the majority of people in the village. They had one child, who died in infancy. They very much want another. But while Matarē was away working as an indentured labourer, Marotē had an intrigue with a man from another village, during which she took contraceptive medicine. The affair was discovered by her husband's brother, who told 842 Matarē about it when he returned, and wanted him to divorce her. 837 But he did not do so, partly because he liked her, but also because she is Pinari's daughter, and he did not want to offend the *tsunaun*. As his brother and another man had given her a thrashing, he left it at that. He has never taken a second wife, and says he does not want one. Marotē has not conceived again, and believes that this is because she took the contraceptive medicine. She has tried various counteracting medicines, but without result. To my personal knowledge, her menstrual periods are normal and regular, and there seems no reason why, having already borne one child, she should not become pregnant again, as both she and her husband are young and, to all appearance, perfectly healthy and vigorous. Another woman, who took the contraceptive after the birth of her first child, has been married three times and has had no more children.

ATTITUDE TO STERILITY

842 In these 'prescriptions' directions are given for rendering a woman permanently barren. According to my informants these are not seldom carried out. It is a curious anomaly that any one should desire permanent sterility in a community where children are generally welcomed. Such a step, believed to be irrevocable, would not be necessary to ensure to a woman freedom with her lover, the reason most frequently given for the use of these 'medicines'. It may be that the extraordinary carelessness with regard to time characteristic of these people may make a woman under such circumstances indifferent to the permanency of the result. Two women told me they did it in a passion of grief after losing their first child. A tendency to impulsive action, with consequences [152] out of all proportion to its cause, seems inherent in the Melanesian temperament, and this manifestation of it is perhaps comparable with the frenzy which leads men and women to commit suicide on some quite paltry provocation (see p. 485). The practice of using 'medicine' believed to make sterility permanent seems to be taken

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DISCIPLINE

854 While they are very small, the children are subjected to little or nothing that we should describe as discipline. If a baby gets hold of something he ought not to have, his mother may take it away from him, but if he howls she usually gives it back. I have heard a woman shout to her baby not to lick up water from the ground, but immediately afterwards he ate a leaf which he had picked up, without comment from her. I once incurred the wrath of the mother of a child of about two, because I took away from him a long bush knife with which he seemed in imminent danger of doing himself an injury. He screamed, and his mother came running, and scolding me roundly for having made him cry, gave the knife back to him. The babies seem to learn at an early age how to handle sharp instruments, for cuts are rare. But they sometimes pay dearly for the experience which takes the place of precept. Burns are distressingly frequent. Fires are lit on the ground, or on the floor of a hut, and there is nothing to prevent a baby from crawling or rolling into them. Not only do no precautions seem to be taken against such disasters, but one of the first things a toddler is asked to do by a lazy parent is to go and fetch a piece of smouldering ember or burning stick with which to rekindle his pipe. Obedience to this—or any other—order is never insisted upon, however. Scenes like this are enacted in every village every day. Father is sitting on the verandah or on a log somewhere about the village, his pipe has gone out. He says to his small daughter, aged perhaps five, '*Di ma ta tsura.*' 'Fetch me some fire.' '*Tsuga.*' 'I don't want to,' says she, without moving. Father takes no notice at all, but goes on with what he happens to be doing without his pipe, and presently gets up and fetches his fire for himself. I have never seen a child made to do an errand if it did not want to.

[566] A child who is *tsunaun* has only to cry, for all the people within reach to rush up to him, and, if possible, give him what he is crying for. Several men once spent the greater part of a day in making ceremonial pudding for Wanias merely because he cried for some. Other children are given what they cry for if it does not involve too much trouble, or, if too big to be soothed by being offered the breast, they are left to cry themselves quiet.

● 152 855 Some children indulge in tempestuous fits of howling. This sometimes takes the form of a series of disconnected yells which

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sound as though they are deliberate, rather than the spontaneous reaction to pain or trouble. One small boy, perhaps four or five years old, used to sit on the ground and howl; after awhile, if taken no notice of, he would put his head on the ground between his feet and howl still more loudly, kicking first with one foot and then with the other. No one would pay any attention to him, unless after ten minutes or so an older child went to him and picked him up and carried him off. Gaua, a girl of five or six, used to have a howling fit of this sort every time her father went off on some expedition, because she wanted to go too. She was always left to howl till she stopped of her own accord. Gaua rarely cried for any other reason, except occasionally when she wanted a piece of taro. Another little girl, about the same age, used to be constantly having fits of what seemed like hysterical sobbing, in which she almost choked herself. I could never find out any cause for such behaviour, and her mother said she did not know why the child did it. A typical incident proceeded thus: She lay on the ground with her head down, howling loudly enough to be heard all over the village. For a long time no one took any notice of her, then another child went up and spoke to her. This had no effect whatever. Her mother went to her. She stopped just long enough to cough, and then continued to howl. Her mother pulled her on to her feet and towards the house; she kicked and struggled all the time, but the woman was very gentle with her, making no attempt to slap her. Presently her mother picked her up; she was quiet for a few minutes, but soon started yelling again, whereupon her mother put her on the ground again and went indoors. She lay there howling for some time.

Children are sometimes scolded, but only very rarely have I seen any one lift a hand to a child, much less a stick or other weapon, though they sometimes threaten to do so. Once, for example, a small boy came up crying to his mother, who was sweeping in front of the hut. She lifted her broom as if to hit him, but did not do so. He lay on the ground screaming for some time, she took no more notice of him, but went on with her sweeping. Sometimes a threat of this kind is made in fun, and is so understood by the child. A small boy held out a coco-nut to a woman, pretending to offer it to her, but when she put out a hand to take it he snatched it back. She had just come in from a canoe trip, and had a paddle in her hand. She pretended to hit him with it, and they both

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177 however, permitted to shoot in return, and as far as I could make
684 out, the affair was generally hardly more than a form. This proce-
685 dure is now, however, no longer permitted, matters of this kind being dealt with by the District Officer.

685 The theft of other property, even of pigs, is regarded as a minor offence, over which the injured parties are very angry and talk a great deal, but eventually agree to the settlement of the affair by the payment of a fine. I have a story of a man called Tianowan, living at Ruri, who stole a pig belonging to Mudidemets, which he killed and ate. He was made to pay back a pig to Mudidemets, which was killed and eaten by the two men together, 'then Mudidemets was not angry with Tianowan any more'. Another story tells how a group of boys were always stealing bananas belonging to a man who lived at a neighbouring village. One day he caught them, and brought them to his place, and held them prisoners. The *tsunaun* of their own village brought a length of *beroan* to pay the owner of the bananas to let them go; he said that was not enough, so the
674 *tsunaun* paid him two lengths, and he let the boys go. I did not personally experience any cases of theft, although I neglected the advice of the planters to keep all my goods locked up. A boy about thirteen, living at Kurtatchi with his mother, but actually belonging to another village, had the reputation of being a thief (*ti a mot*). Every one knew this, and discussed it with disapprobation, and several people warned me not to allow him to come on to my verandah. But I never heard of his being punished for any definite theft, and I am uncertain how far the charges against him were true, and how far they were made because he did not really belong to the village, in which he was unpopular.

INTENTIONAL DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY

425 As noted elsewhere in greater detail, a man's pigs and coco-nut
768 palms, and a woman's taro, are used, on the death of the owner, to provide food for the people who come to wail. But it is not only the produce that is taken, the coco-nut palms are cut down—or were, until the practice was forbidden by the Government as wasteful—and the garden laid waste. If articles such as ornaments are put into the grave they are sometimes, but not always, broken. (See account of burying of pillow on p. 492.)

152 There are also other occasions on which property is intentionally
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destroyed. The usual way of showing anger is to break up one's own personal possessions.[1] One day I heard a great commotion inside a hut, and on inquiring the reason, was told that two women had been fighting because one had eaten some pawpaw belonging to the other, who was very angry, and had, besides fighting the culprit, broken all her *own* pots; it was her howling that called my attention to the incident. It might be thought that the breakage was done accidentally in a fit of blind temper, but other instances indicate that it was far more likely to have been intentional. In my collection of stories there is one in which a man who, rebuffed in his efforts to have illicit sexual intercourse with a woman, ran away and hid when summoned to the shore for the punishment by shooting. The double injury, his undesired attentions and his cowardly attempt to escape from the consequences, angered the woman so much that she destroyed her own taro garden.

Other people's property may also be broken, with the owner's consent, for the same reason. A curious example occurred during my residence. The mission teacher at Tabut, a village friendly to and closely associated with Kurtatchi, had, with more zeal than discretion, been trying to stamp out the custom of wearing hoods in accordance with the rule that a woman must avoid her *toaris*, He had even gone so far as to damage one of the hoods. This was reported at Kurtatchi, a more conservative village, and so incensed the women there that they made a descent on Tabut *en bloc* for the purpose of showing their displeasure. I was invited to go with them. We approached the village slowly, in a procession, with some show of ceremony. Every woman wore her hood, some even had two, one on the top of the other. The Tabut women received us amicably, and so far from resisting the destruction of their property, actually brought out their water coco-nuts to be broken up, though I fancy this was co-operation in self-defence, as they were careful to bring out old ones, whereas if left to themselves, the Kurtatchi women exercised no such discrimination. Pots were also brought out, and laid on the verandahs, but honour was apparently satisfied with this gesture, for no pots were actually broken on this occasion. When they considered that enough damage had been done, the Kurtatchi women went home, and no retaliation followed.

On another occasion the same thing took place at Kurtatchi.

[1] This is paralleled in other parts of Melanesia, cf. Ivens, 1927, p. 12.

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764 in progress. All that took place, therefore, was done on the initia-
177 tive of the natives themselves, influenced by what they had learned from the mission. It is perhaps worth while to include an account of this funeral, as it represents a transition period in the conflict between the old ways and the new.

A Funeral at Petats

764 Tsirisia died in the night of November 7, 1929. His death was not unexpected, and on one occasion as long ago as October 4, when he had lost consciousness, ritual wailing had actually been started for him. His son and a clansman were with him when he died. Wailing began immediately, and lasted for about an hour, then ceased, to begin again at dawn. It is a most mournful and eerie sound, which those who have once heard it will never forget.

Next morning his son and two neighbours began at once to make the coffin. They utilized an old canoe, by cutting off the two ends, and cutting the middle in half lengthwise. The two halves they nailed to cross-pieces, to give the coffin the necessary width at its upper end, and put in a piece of wood neatly shaped to fit. They said the canoe was used because it was handy, to save labour.[1] After washing it in the sea they lined it with crushed leaves and left it to dry.

Meanwhile the women were wailing inside Tsirisia's house. The widow was sitting at the foot of the body, which had been laid on a sleeping-mat on one of the sitting-platforms inside the house. It was then shaved and washed. The wailing ceased during the process of shaving, but towards the end of it the widow started again and continued alone for a time. During the washing the others joined in again. The body was carefully dried, a black loin-cloth was put round it and fixed with a piece of red cloth, another loin-cloth was laid over it, and a white one on the top. The coffin was brought and placed beside the body, which was lifted into it amid increased wailing. Men and women crowded round and looked in, resting their arms on the edge and all wailing. Tears were dropping freely
● [152] from their eyes and mucus from their noses. A crowd of children stood just outside, some crying from sheer fright. The widow looked up and waved them away.

[1] It is possible that this explanation may have been a—perhaps unconscious—rationalization, and that the use of the canoe may bear some reference to the former custom of burying at sea. I did not meet with any other instance of it.

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764 had been made at uniformity of arrangement, each grave seemed to have been dug at the choice of the persons digging. All were very much neglected and overgrown, but the new cemeteries which are now to be found in connexion with most villages where there is a resident mission teacher are kept tidy under his supervision. Graves in these new cemeteries are marked with roughly carved wooden crosses. Graves in the pagan graveyards were marked with cordyline plants, or, most often, not marked at all, though the relatives knew where they were and pointed them out to me. They [152] did not mind going there in daylight, but only very special circumstances would induce them to go after dark.

No distinction was made in the graves of women and children, and no special portion of the graveyard was assigned to them. [766] Children who die at birth or very shortly after are still buried in the house; for them there is no wailing. Otherwise, children are wailed for and buried in just the same manner as adults. Wailing is not confined to the village in which the person died. One evening the sound arose from a house near my own. Knowing of no death in the village, I made inquiries and was told that news had just been received of the death of Kiots, the sister of Marotē's mother, at Ieta. The wailing went on for a short time only, but next evening it was repeated; the reason then given was 'because Marotē and Pesē are sorry again about their "mother!".'

[762] Persons who die by suicide are, if their bodies can be recovered, wailed for and buried just like any other dead, and I did not learn that any special treatment was thought to be meted out to them in the after-world. Unfortunately, I omitted to ascertain what was thought to be the fate of persons whose bodies were not available for funerary rites.

CANNIBALISM

266 766 In the olden days, under certain circumstances, the bodies of the dead were eaten. The bones of such victims were afterwards buried without ceremony, with the exception of the jaw, which was cleaned and hung up in the 'men's house'.[1] There seemed to be no fear of the *urar* of such people returning to plague those who had eaten them.

266 721 Like many, probably most, of the groups who practise, or used

[1] The jaws of pigs eaten on ceremonial occasions are now substituted for human jaws.